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Dragoons Establish In-Country Care for Injured Warriors

Zabul, Afghanistan- Sometimes, for a true warrior, the biggest defeat they can suffer is being removed from the fight by a minor injury. Recognizing the psychological need for Soldiers to remain connected to their comrades and the mission, the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment has developed the Dragoon Case Management Program. The DCMP is an in-country patient treatment program located at Kandahar Air Field. It is designed to provide Soldiers with minor injuries or behavioral health issues the treatment and physical care they need without sending them home.

“Keeping Soldiers in theater when they are hurt makes them feel like they are still a part of the team,” Cpt. Bryan Cahill the 2SCR Regimental Nurse said, “A part of 2SCR; they are still a part of the family.”

Following the example of our predecessors, the Dragoon Case Management Program was born. Cahill explained that they used the case management name to avoid any confusion with the Wounded Warrior concept or the Warrior Transition Unit back in Vilseck.

“We went with Dragoon Case Management because Wounded Warrior sounds too much like WTU,” Cahill said. “Some Soldiers think ‘A WTU oh man, that means I am out of my unit. I’m done!’”

Cahill went on to explain that a WTU is a separate unit. Soldiers are no longer in their chain of command even though most units still reach out to them.

“We went with the DCMP to eliminate confusion for the Soldier or anyone back home,” he said.

When Soldiers arrive at KAF, they are provided barracks rooms stocked with all the necessities to make them feel at home. Bunks, linen, PT belts and personal hygiene items are available for Soldiers.

“We have everything there to make them feel at home,” Cahill remarked. “It isn’t like we tell them to go hang out in a tent and come to physical therapy when they can.”

In fact, life in the DCMP is very structured to insure the best quality care. The program is overseen by Staff Sgt. Sean Riley and Sgt. Jennifer Kendrick. These two NCOs run the day-to-day operations at DCMP. They check on each Soldier several times a day and make sure all normal military standards are upheld.

According to Cahill none of the Soldiers are allowed to just sit in their room and feel sorry for themselves. Each patient, in between the required medical appointments, works with the Squadron liaison on KAF helping in a variety of positions.

Since the beginning of the deployment, 2SCR has admitted 46 Soldiers into the program and 23 have returned to their units. Only 13 Soldiers needed to be evacuated to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for further treatment. There are currently 12 Soldiers from across the Regiment enrolled in the DCMP.

Further Treatment

When a Dragoon is seriously injured and must be evacuated to the U.S. for further treatment, the 2nd Cavalry Association has been designated by the Regimental Commander as the official representative of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment at Walter Reed Army Hospital or any other military hospitals to which they might be sent.

A representative of the Association meets with each Soldier as they arrive at the hospital. The Association keeps track of the patient’s progress the entire time they are hospitalized and helps coordinate any arrangements with the Wounded Warrior Program in the hospital.

The Association provides a weekly report to the Regiment, unit commanders and the rear detachment on each visit with the Soldiers. The Association also keeps track of units working directly with the Regiment such as the 1st Battalion 4th Infantry Regiment from Hohenfels, Germany. Dragoons have long prided themselves on being more than a Regiment. They are a family. The long standing motto has been “Dragoons for Life.” So whether it is in the deserts of Kandahar or stateside at Walter Reed, if a Trooper is hurt, you can be sure there will be a Dragoon there to watch over them.

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Listening: Col. James Blackburn, the 2SCR Commander (left) and Regimental Command Sgt. Major Mark Morris (right) listen to one Soldier’s story at the DCMP during a recent visit to Kandahar Air Field.